



news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Meet Brendan Nichols

LEC JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN AND CREW FOREMAN

FOR Brendan Nichols, being a lineman is more than a career. It's a job that fits who he is, someone who enjoys working outdoors, working with his hands, taking on a challenge and serving the people around him.

Brendan is originally from Shelby, Montana, where he grew up around farming and ranching, hunting and fishing, and life on the Hi-Line.

"Shelby was a quiet place to grow up, but there was always lots to do on the Hi-Line," Brendan said.

After high school, Brendan initially took a different path, enrolling at the University of Montana in Missoula to explore a degree in business. After some time in college, however, conversations with family members led him to consider a career change. His uncle, who served on the Board of Trustees at Marias River Electric Cooperative, told him about the line trade and Montana Tech's pre-apprenticeship line program.

"It sounded interesting. I love working outside, I'm always seeking thrills, I love heights, and I love working with my hands," Brendan said. "It sounded like being a lineman was kind of perfect for me."

Brendan left UM and enrolled in the Pre-Apprentice Line Program at Montana Tech in Butte. After graduating in 2007, he was hired by Rocky Mountain Contractors (RMC) as a groundman.

He later interviewed with Mountain States Line Constructors and entered its apprenticeship program. Over the next three and a half years, Brendan



LEC Journeyman Lineman and Crew Foreman Brendan Nichols poses with his family. | COURTESY PHOTO

The faces of LEC

Introducing our Lincoln Electric family of employees to all our members

worked throughout Montana, North Dakota and Colorado while completing his training.

After "topping out" and becoming a journeyman lineman, Brendan spent years traveling across the Lower 48, gaining experience and eventually becoming a crew foreman. He later returned closer to home and went back

to work for RMC.

That move would eventually introduce him to Lincoln Electric Cooperative.

While at RMC, Brendan performed contract work for LEC and became familiar with the cooperative's electrical system, employees and members. He worked his way up to crew foreman at RMC before seeing an opening for a full-time lineman at LEC.

By then, his priorities had changed.

"As your kids grow older, your priorities change," Brendan said. "I

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FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	YEAR TO DATE AUGUST 2026	YEAR TO DATE AUGUST 2025
KWh SALES	85,716,211	88,528,774
REVENUE	\$10,681,684	\$10,139,543
COST OF POWER	\$4,309,406	\$4,246,924
OPERATING EXPENSE	\$4,204,018	\$3,891,805
MARGINS	\$921,478	\$726,167
NUMBER OF MEMBERS	5,419	5,349
NUMBER OF METERS	6,913	6,779
MILES OF LINE	1,049	1,022
TOTAL UTILITY PLANT	\$43,332,288	\$42,485,338
MEMBER EQUITY	\$17,308,303	\$16,204,480
AUGUST AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL USE (KWH)	881	867
AUGUST AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL BILLING	\$136.07	\$127.78

Keep the warm air inside this winter

COLD winter weather can mean higher electricity use as your heating system works harder to keep your home comfortable. A little preparation and a few simple changes can help reduce wasted energy and keep winter electric costs under control.

Find and seal air leaks. Check windows, doors, attic hatches, wiring and plumbing openings, recessed lights and other areas where warm air can escape. Caulk and weatherstripping can help seal many common leaks.

Keep your furnace filter clean. A dirty filter restricts airflow and makes your heating system work harder. Check your filter regularly, and clean or replace it as needed.

Use a programmable thermostat. Automatically lowering the temperature when you're away or asleep can help reduce unnecessary heating. Set it to warm the house when you need it most.

Choose efficient equipment. When it's time to replace your heating system, consider energy-efficient HVAC equipment and ENERGY STAR® options that can help lower long-term energy use.

Use SmartHub to watch your electricity use. Keeping an eye on your daily usage can help you see how colder temperatures and changes around your home affect your electric bill. Visit lincolnelectric.smarthub.coop to log in.

Small steps can add up to meaningful savings. Seal leaks, save energy, stay warm and keep more money in your pocket this winter.

See home winterization graphic next page

BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on September 21. A quorum of trustees was present, and the board took the following actions:

- Approved Policies 201, 202, 203, 414, 506 as presented.
- Approved Matt Quinn as the Director of PNGC and the designated membership representing LEC.
- Approved resolution 2026-9 approving Matt Quinn to sign documents regarding the PSA for Market Purchase for operating years 2029 through 2032.
- Approved the donation for the Tobacco Valley Senior Center for \$2000.
- Approved the donation for Log Jam for \$400 in event tickets.

LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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OFFICE

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 Eureka, Montana 59917

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday
 7:00 AM - 5:30 PM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rick Peterson
 President

Joel Graves
 Vice President

Sandi Mason
 Secretary-Treasurer

Myra Appel
Larry Benson
Rodney Kane
David Purdy
Tina Taurman

Matt Quinn
 General Manager

Lincoln Electric's Board of Trustees holds regular monthly meetings at the boardroom in the cooperative office. These are typically scheduled on the third Monday of each month at 4 p.m. Members are encouraged to attend. If you have any items of interest, please contact the general manager prior to the meeting.

NEXT MEETING DATE:
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2026



**Lincoln Electric
 Cooperative, Inc.**

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

SEND YOUR IDEAS TO:

memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop

Winter Home: Keep Warm Air In And Money In Your Pocket



When the harsh cold winds of winter blow, having a nice warm home in which to retreat is great. The only problem is making that home nice and warm can be expensive.

With some preparation and work before winter hits, you can reduce your energy use and save money.

It is worth making sure your home heating system is as efficient as possible to prevent the waste of energy and your hard-earned money.



SOME COMMON AREAS TO FIND AIR LEAKS INCLUDE:

- Behind or under knee walls
- Wiring holes
- Furnace vents
- Recessed lights
- The attic hatch
- Plumbing vents
- Dryer vents
- Windows and doors



START BY LOCATING AIR LEAKS

Some of the air leaks can easily be fixed yourself with caulking and weather stripping. Other leaks might take a contractor's help to repair.



There are other steps you can take to save on your power bill and increase the efficiency of your home as well.



KEEP YOUR FURNACE FILTER CLEAN

Clean or change the filter monthly to keep air flowing freely. Dust and dirt slow down air flow, which makes the system work harder and ends up wasting energy and costing you money.



INSTALL A PROGRAMMABLE THERMOSTAT

This can help automatically turn the heat down when no one is home and turn the heat up when you need a warmer home.



INVEST IN ENERGY EFFICIENT HVAC EQUIPMENT

When it comes time to replace your Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system, invest in energy efficient equipment that will help save money on heating bills.



EnergyStar recommends having your HVAC system evaluated if it is over 10 years old or if it is not keeping your home comfortable.



If your system needs to be replaced, talk to your installer about getting the most efficient unit you can afford.



SEAL LEAKS.

SAVE ENERGY.

STAY WARM.

SAVE MONEY.



Source: SafeElectricity.org

BRENDAN

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realized family was way more important than chasing contract work, so I decided to apply with Lincoln Electric Cooperative."

In 2022, Brendan left RMC and joined the LEC team.

"It was a relief to be home and not have to move around chasing work and missing my kids growing up," he said. "I wanted to be there for them, and being at LEC allowed that to happen."

Since joining LEC, Brendan has distinguished himself not only through his skills as a lineman, but also through his leadership. In 2026, he was promoted to crew foreman.

"He shows strong leadership on the job and attention to detail and safety," said LEC Operations Manager Josh Jankovski. "You can tell that he cares about his crew and his job. He also does a lot for LEC and the community when he's not at work. He's just a stand-up guy."

That willingness to step up extends well beyond Brendan's daily responsibilities.

He has served on LEC's Safety Committee and regularly helps with electrical safety demonstrations at local elementary schools. When LEC needs someone to operate the electrical safety demonstration trailer, Brendan is a familiar face.



He also makes time for community traditions. Each Christmas, Brendan and his family decorate his bucket truck with lights for Eureka's annual Christmas Parade of Lights. When Eureka Rendezvous rolls around, you can often find Brendan in the parade with his family by his side, waving to members, handing out candy and hauling LEC's always-popular PistonBully snow machine.

Brendan also serves as union stew-

ard, representing LEC's bargaining-unit employees, a role he takes seriously.

"It's a responsibility I don't take lightly," Brendan said. "My crew needs the best representation, and I strive to provide that."

Away from work, Brendan enjoys camping, hunting, fishing and, most importantly, spending time with his family.

When asked about his goals, both at work and at home, his answer comes back to a consistent principle in his life: be patient and present.

"What I do day in and day out is a passion. It's also pretty straightforward," Brendan said. "I want to serve Lincoln Electric Cooperative and its members to the best of my ability, and at home I want to be the best dad and husband for my family. My motto is to be patient and present."

It's a motto that carries across every part of Brendan's life. On the job, it means taking the time to work safely, looking out for his crew and being there for LEC's members. At home, it means making the most of the time he has with his family.

Whether he's leading a crew in the field, teaching kids about electrical safety, representing his coworkers or riding alongside his family in a community parade, Brendan strives to show up for the people who count on him.

Thank you for all you do, Brendan. We're proud to have you as part of the LEC team. RM

HONORING OUR VETERANS

Honoring all who served, remembering their sacrifices, and thanking the veterans who have given so much in service to our country.

This Veterans Day, Lincoln Electric Cooperative extends our sincere gratitude to all veterans—past and present.

Thank you for your service.

Happy THANKSGIVING DAY

In honor of the holiday, LEC will be closed on November 26th.

Please report any outages to
406-561-7207